

Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) Updates

August 11, 2017

2017-18 Application Approval

We began the final approval of VPK applications and budgets in ePlan during the week of July 31. You have already been given your award amounts for the school year, and we are not expecting any changes to those funding amounts this year as we are solely reviewing for adherence to spending guidelines. We are also verifying teacher certification and creating an up-to-date General Assurances Form. We will be in contact in the coming weeks as applications and budgets are approved in ePlan.

VPK Director Convening

The department will host VPK Director Convenings in each grand division at the end of August. Our goal for these meetings is to kick off our quality improvement work for the 2017-18 school year and provide opportunities for collaboration and professional learning. Dates and locations for the convenings are as follows:

August 23 8:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. EDT – Knoxville, TN: Sarah Simpson Center, Great Room

August 24 8:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. CDT – Murfreesboro, TN: Murfreesboro City Board of Education

August 28 8:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. CDT – Jackson, TN: Jackson/Madison Board of Education

You may register one VPK director from each district. Please register for the convening using this [link](#).

In response to conflicts in schedules, we will schedule a forth convening in Nashville around the beginning of September. Please keep your eyes open for the date and location of that session.

TN ELDS Alignment Process

We are currently working to align our four-year-old TN ELDS with the K–12 instructional standards. We expect to have these revisions ready to post for public comment in the next few weeks. Additionally, in order to provide opportunities for your feedback, we will conduct roundtable discussions regarding these updates along with our VPK Director Convenings. Additional details are forthcoming.

Early Learning Model (ELM) Phase II

As we continue to work on pre-K quality improvements and, to support you with implementation, we will continue ELM training this year. ELM Phase II sessions will begin in September and will be conducted in the eight CORE regions. Similar to last year, you will register a leadership team who can be involved in these meetings. Details around dates and specific content for these meetings are coming soon.

Scope of Services and Attendance Policy

The new VPK scope of services can be found in ePlan and on the [VPK website](#). We have also uploaded [attendance policy guidance](#). The attendance policy can be used as your district develops its own policy, or you can apply it as is. Please note that **districts are required to have an attendance policy and to communicate that policy with families**. However, districts may choose to address additional items not addressed in the department's guidance document.

When making decisions around withdrawals, the department will refer to this policy as it is written and therefore looking at frequency of absences, restorative practices, excuses, etc.

Enrollment Reminders

Many of you have begun to enroll Tier II students and Tier III students. As a reminder, utilization rates around your enrollment of low-income four-year-olds enrolled in VPK classes will be one factor used when making funding decisions for next year.

Several of you have asked about procedures for enrolling three-year-olds. As VPK is intended to serve four-year-olds, we have not given permission for any district to begin to enroll three-year-olds. However, if you are confident that you have exhausted your pool of four-year-olds, you may submit a request to enroll three-year-olds. Attached to this email, you will find the procedures for a request to enroll three-year-olds. If you are granted permission to enroll three-year-olds, you must keep this approval on file, as program evaluators who visit classes may ask to see this documentation. Please continue to make every effort to ensure that your program serves our intended student population of low-income four-year-olds.

Please keep all income verification forms on file with the VPK director; there may be times during the year when we will ask to verify this information.

Contact Information



As always, if you have any questions or concerns regarding VPK, please contact Candace (Candi) Cook at Candace.Cook@tn.gov. You may also reach Candi at (615) 741-9051 or (615) 490-5061.